

**Green, W.** (2019). Engaging students as partners in global learning: Some possibilities and provocations. Final author version of article published in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23 (1).

## **Engaging ‘students as partners’ in global learning: some possibilities and provocations**

Many educational institutions aim to engage students in ‘global learning’ at home and abroad through the process of ‘internationalisation of the curriculum’ (IoC). Yet research indicates that students experience and understand IoC in diverse, often unintended ways, and instances of students’ diverse perspectives informing IoC development are rare. Framed by the concept of ‘students as partners’ (SaP), an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship brought together students and academics from diverse disciplinary, cultural and national backgrounds to co-develop rich global learning experiences in the formal and informal curriculum. Surveys and narrative interviews showed that adopting a partnership approach enabled all participating staff and students to engage in global learning. Characteristically, those who engaged in critical transformative learning framed their partnerships in terms of reciprocity, recognized their cultural ignorance productively, and engaged in global learning as ontoepistemological explorations. Further, this study demonstrates how the authentic engagement of ‘students as partners’ challenges naturalised institutional practices concerning access and equity, outcomes and process, and power and privilege. I frame these challenges as provocations; that is, as invitations to critically analyse and creatively respond to such historically entrenched practices through staff-student partnerships in global learning, ‘as if’ they were already our way of life.

Key words: global learning, students as partners, internationalisation of the curriculum,

Ideally, education develops our capacity to live, work and continue to learn ethically and effectively with others in our interconnected world. Developing such capacities is equally important for all of our students, whether they imagine their future abroad, or in the increasingly pluralist societies of their home country. This paper takes, as a starting point, the concept of ‘global learning’ to describe the empirical and normative imperatives now confronting educational institutions: the empirical challenge of understanding how increasing global interconnectedness transforms and is transformed by our actions, and the normative challenge of determining what we should do individually and collectively in response to these transformations (Rizvi, 2014).

Many educational institutions address the challenges of globalisation by intentionally engaging university staff and students in ‘global learning’ at home and abroad through the process of ‘internationalisation of the curriculum’ (IoC); that is, incorporating

international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study (Leask 2015, p.9).

In spite of significant attention given to IoC (Leask 2013; 2015), we know very little about how students experience and make sense of universities’ efforts to internationalise their curriculum (Green & Whitsed 2015; Heffernan et al 2018). Until now, IoC research and practice initiatives have - very usefully - focused on engaging academics within their disciplinary contexts (Clifford 2009; Leask, 2015). However, it is equally important that students are engaged deeply in, and by an internationalised curriculum. The relatively few studies exploring IoC from students’ perspectives indicate that students experience and understand IoC in diverse, often unintended ways, as several examples in this paper will illustrate. Moreover, the increasing cultural diversity of student cohorts in universities is rarely recognised as valuable cultural capital that could inform the design and enrich the practice of global learning for all (Mestenhauser, 2011). We might say that students have been a blind spot in the IoC literature.

This paper reports on research undertaken during an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship, which positioned students as collaborators, alongside university staff in the design,

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practice and evaluation of global learning in the formal and co-curriculum. Informed by recent work on 'students as partners' (SaP) the Fellowship brought together students and staff from diverse cultural and national backgrounds in several disciplines to co-develop global learning in the formal and informal curriculum, at home and abroad. Following an overview of the Fellowship, I will examine some of the Fellowship's key findings, paying particular attention to the ways SaP approaches to global learning challenge the traditional relationships between knowledge, power, and identity in universities, and provocatively open up possibilities for change.

### **A note on terminology - defining 'global learning'**

After considering a range of definitions of 'global learning' (cf Andreotti & Souza, 2008; Kahn & Agnew, 2017), the following definition was adopted as a way of framing the Fellowship;

Global learning is the critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability. Through global learning, students should

- 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences,
  - 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities,
  - 3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.
- (Association of American Colleges & Universities [AAC&U] 2015)

This definition addresses Rizvi's (2014) dual challenge, in that it describes the empirical inquiry to be undertaken through global learning and provides a skeletal guide for action in its three learning objectives. This definition not only grapples conceptually with 'the complexities of global systems and legacies' but also addresses, in its three learning objectives, the curricular domains of knowing, doing and being. According to Barnett and Coate (2005), curricula for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be 'deliberately designed' to prompt the '*triple engagement*' (p.p.2-3) of staff and students in all three interrelated domains. Importantly, the AAC&U definition does not offer a set of concrete guidelines; it allows for, even necessitates, the co-construction of knowledge by particular people in particular contexts.

The decision to adopt the term 'global learning', rather than the related term 'IoC' throughout this Fellowship was motivated by observations that 'IoC' is conceptually 'fuzzy', and 'poorly understood' (Green & Whitsed 2013; Leask 2013, 2015; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). IoC is difficult to define, because it couples two ideologically-laden terms: 'internationalisation' and 'curriculum' (Green & Whitsed 2013; Leask, 2013). Decisions about curriculum in the context of internationalisation are ideological in nature, shaped by beliefs about internationalisation and its relationship to globalisation, and even about the curriculum itself. Understandings of curriculum in higher education are varied and often superficial (Fraser & Bosanquet 2006), and serious discussion about it is rare (Barnett & Coate, 2005). For these reasons, the Fellowship focussed on 'learning', rather than 'curriculum'. 'Learning' sharpened our attention on the key processes and outcomes of IoC, and clearly signalled students' as well as lecturers' agency in the pedagogic space. 'Global', rather than 'international' was also chosen with strategic intent: to ensure that Fellowship activities avoided entanglement in the instrumental and piecemeal approaches to 'internationalisation', which are undertaken in many universities (de Wit 2013), and instead addressed the implications of increasing global connectedness as a dynamic phenomenon, which impacts on all students, differently, in their professional and civic lives. Thus, *global* learning requires explorations of 'specific historical and socio-political moments .... [It] demands that students and educators understand the *universal* through the *particular* and the *particular* through the *universal*' (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 53). In short, it calls for the 'critical transformative' engagement of teachers and students alike (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009, p. 167).

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### **Rethinking student engagement in global learning**

Much attention has been given to engaging academic staff in IoC in recent years (Clifford 2009; Green & Whitsed 2013; Leask 2013, 2015; Leask & Bridge 2013). IoC, as a complex, values-based practice necessarily involves disciplinary communities in imaginative epistemological explorations (Leask & Bridge 2013). Active, critical engagement in global learning is as important for students as it is for teachers, as they each navigate 'the rapidly developing and ever-densening networks of interconnections and interdependencies' that characterise their lives (Tomlinson, 2000, p.2),

To date, little attention has been given to how students engage with the opportunities for global learning they encounter at university (Green & Whitsed, 2015; Heffernan et al 2018), and what universities do to further engage, or disengage them. Available studies suggest that internationalised curricula, as designed and taught by lecturers are often experienced and understood differently by students. One study in the social science disciplines found that students bring 'an integrating, complex view' of internationalisation, which clashes with 'the narrow, content-focused view' of IoC they found in their courses of study (Absalom & Vadura, 2006, p.332). Other studies reveal that many students do not recognise, engage with, or see value in available opportunities to develop global perspectives and intercultural capabilities. Typically, local students do not take advantage of the opportunities for global learning offered by the presence of international students, while international students report significant difficulties when trying to establish meaningful interactions (Sawir, 2013; Volet & Jones, 2012). Zimitat's (2008) survey of undergraduate students in one university, which had undertaken a strategic commitment to IoC, found that approximately half did not recognize an 'international dimension to their experiences' when this was offered. On the other hand, several studies show that international students experience apparently internationalised curriculum as parochial, dominated by 'western' knowledge', and lacking relevance, in a range of countries including Malaysia (Pandian, Baboo & Mahfoodh, 2016), Australia and Scotland (Cheng et al 2018). Cheng et al's comparative study between Australia and Scotland found a 'mismatch between academics' and students' understandings of curriculum internationalisation' (p. 754). Heffernan et al's (2018) UK study revealed that while the majority of students wanted opportunities for global learning at home, significant differences in students' experiences exist between disciplines. That study concluded that more attention should be given to developing discipline-relevant international dimensions in ways that 'engage with student views effectively' (p. 14).

### **Engaging students as partners in global learning**

'Students as partners' (SaP), is a particular approach to student engagement, which grew out of concerns about how to engage 21<sup>st</sup> century students in their learning (Healey, Flint & Harrington, 2016). As a metaphor, SaP 'challenges traditional assumptions about the identities of, and relationships between, learners and teachers' (Matthews, 2017). Essentially SaP involves students as genuine contributors to all aspects of university life by giving them opportunities 'to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways' to the formal and informal curriculum (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, p. 6). Thus, SaP calls for a shift from merely listening to 'the student voice' to engaging with them in decision-making processes (Healey et al, 2016). Ideally, SaP repositions teachers and learners in relation to each other and to the work they undertake at university (Matthews, 2017). It suggests a powerful – and quite radical - alternate social imaginary to the neo-liberalism because students 'as partners' are not viewed as customers consuming the products of lecturers' labour, but rather co-producers of knowledge (Green, 2017b). When SaP functions as 'an act of resistance', which disrupts the traditional pedagogical hierarchy, it promises to transform individuals, disciplines and institutions (Matthews (2017, p.6).

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With its emphasis on reciprocity, empowerment, trust, courage, plurality, responsibility, authenticity, honesty, inclusivity, the SaP framework (Healey *et al.*, 2016) resonates with earlier traditions of critical and emancipatory pedagogy. For example, bell hooks (1994, p. 8) argued

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in each other, in hearing one another's voices, in recognising one another's presence. ... There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources. Used constructively they enhance the capacity of any class.

Philosophically then, SaP suggests possibilities for collaborative practices in global learning, which recognise, value and use students' diverse perspectives, knowledge, skills and experiences. In practice, SaP approaches have produced benefits for students and academics, including enhanced motivation and engagement, better student-staff communications, creativity, learning and employability outcomes and reinvigorated teaching practices (Cook-Sather *et al.*, 2014; Mercer-Mapstone *et al.*, 2017). While there are no published examples of engaging students as partners in global learning, Bell *et al.*'s (2017) study involving six students as partners in one university's strategic plan for intercultural competence found those involved collaboratively designed an effective professional development activity for staff and developed a deep personal investment in the issue.

The philosophical resonance between SaP and global learning, its established benefits and encouraging outcomes of Bell *et al.*'s (2017) study suggest exciting possibilities for engaging 'students as partners' in global learning. At the same time, a systematic review of the SaP literature (Mercer-Mapstone *et al.* 2017) indicates a range of challenges, which need to be addressed. Firstly, SaP practices risk 'prioritizing voices that are already privileged and engaged' because they are predominantly co-curricular and small scale (involving one to five students). Secondly, the SaP literature tends to highlight positive and silence negative outcomes, particularly regarding power inequalities in universities. SaP initiatives develop in the discursive context of higher education's 'contradictory and fragmentary logics' (Peseta *et al.*, (2017, p. 11), yet with few exceptions (*cf* Matthews, 2017), the SaP literature rarely acknowledges and engages theoretically with the realities of macro educational policies, politics and practices. The research project reported here was inspired by the emancipatory, transformative potential of SaP to explore how students and staff might navigate the apparent challenges regarding equity, inclusion, power and knowledge as they engaged in global learning together.

## **The research project**

The Fellowship, 'Engaging students as partners in global learning' (SaPGL) (Green, 2017a) was innovative and open-ended in intent: it aimed to engage students and staff imaginatively and critically with the key concepts, 'students as partners' and 'global learning' and explore how they might together foster critical transformative global learning. Like Cook-Sather and Felton (2017, p. 187), I approached SaP as an 'as if' practice, suspending the 'what-has-been' and the 'what-is', allowing for the 'what-could-be' to emerge. Thirteen pilot projects developed in four Australian universities, all involving students and staff 'as partners' in some, or all aspects of curriculum for global learning: design, enactment, assessment, and evaluation. Informed by Leask's (2015) broad conceptualisation of 'curriculum', these projects covered the formal (n7) and the co-curriculum (n6), fully at home (n9) and abroad/at home (4).

As the Fellow, I facilitated a participatory action research process, adapted from Leask (2013), with five phases (reviewing/reflecting; imagining; revising/planning; acting; evaluating) in order to develop new SaPGL practices. Staff and students were invited, as co-inquirers/co-producers, to pilot initiatives, which they are documenting as case studies. The pilot phase lasted one academic year,

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beginning with a Roundtable to explore the possibilities of SaP for global learning, followed by an intensive workshop for those interested in developing SaPGL pilots. Once pilot teams formed, they were supported by a virtual community of practice, a website, blog, along with my visits to each university. At the year's end, all pilot teams presented their work-in-progress to each other and interested others at a 'critical friends' café'.

During the initial conception (imagine) phase, project teams were encouraged to consider two important interrelated questions: "Who will engage in your SaPGL?," and "what form will the partnership practice take?" (Matthews 2017, p. 2). The first question, concerned with the breadth of engagement, or representativeness of the student cohort is represented as the horizontal axis in the SaP Matrix (Figure 1); the second question, concerned with the depth of engagement, or how much agency students assume is represented in the vertical axis in the Matrix. Reflection on both questions is crucial to SaPGL. Without attention to diversity and inclusion, SaP projects may further build cultural and social capital for the more privileged students (Matthews 2017). One approach to inclusion, represented on the right of the horizontal axis, is to engage all students in any cohort in partnership. Another approach, represented on the left of the horizontal axis, is to purposefully recruit for diversity, or for specific minority groups; for example, Cook-Sather and Agu's (2013) partnership, in which Black and Minority students co-developed a culturally inclusive curriculum. Regarding the roles students take (depth of engagement shown on the vertical axis), several frameworks for mapping levels of participation exist (*cf*, Dunne & Zandstra, 2011). Project teams were encouraged to find the level of engagement right for their context, with 'students as informants', actively engaged in providing critical feedback to lecturers as the minimal form of 'partnership', and 'students as co-creators', with equal responsibility for the global learning curriculum as the deepest form of partnership. The depth and breadth of student engagement of the 13 projects is shown in the SaPGL Matrix (figure 1).

**Figure 1: Engagement of students as partners in global learning (SAPGL) Matrix**

Students as informants		Inclusive (all students)
Selective (few students purpose- fully selected)	<div>1. Selected students engaged as evaluators/ informants in designing GL – 4 projects</div> <div>2. All students have role as informants in designing GL – 1 project</div>	
	<div>3. Selected students actively participated in creation, or co-created GL- 5 projects</div> <div>4. All students actively participated in creation, or co-created GL – 3 projects</div>	
Students as co-creators		

## Methodology

Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) 'Explanatory Design: Participant Selection' was the methodological approach taken throughout the Fellowship. As a mixed methods approach, which allows for greater focus on qualitative data, this approach included surveys taken at the first and last Fellowship events and narrative interviews (Chase, 2005) conducted at the end of the first year. Narrative inquiry as the primary means of data collection seemed appropriate, considering the call for more 'creative,

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observational and qualitative methodologies' in student engagement research (Baron & Corbin, 2012, p. 762), and the innovative, explorative nature of the Fellowship projects (Polkinghorne, 1995),

All SaPGL partners were invited to participate in interviews. One academic and one student were interviewed from each pilot, with the exception of one, where only the lecturer was interviewed, hence a total of 25 interviews (13 staff /12 students). In terms of gender, cultural-linguistic and national backgrounds, discipline and age interviewees reflected the diversity of the participants. To protect participants' anonymity, only their role (student or staff), international or local status, and broad disciplinary category is given here.

Analysis of the narrative data was inductive and iterative, involving movement between the transcripts, the literature and emerging themes, searching for a 'best fit' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). The aim of such narrative analysis is to 'emphasise patterns in the storied selves' (Chase, 2005, p. 657). Although it would be unwise to generalise findings from this explorative narrative approach, a number of implications can be drawn when the findings are considered in the context of the current literature, as I do in the next section.

The following demographic data provide some useful context for the thematic analysis below. All pilot teams except one were culturally diverse. In 12 teams, students were international and local (both Anglophone and cultural minority backgrounds) and lecturers were local only (both Anglophone and cultural minority backgrounds). The outlier, where the academic Anglophone partners did not recruit intentionally for cultural diversity, resulted in a team consisting of all local Anglophone students (thereby further substantiating previous findings of a risk that SaP 'favours "like students" partnering with "like staff"', Matthews 2017, p.2). Teams in the 'selective' partnerships consisted of five to 12 members, with students outnumbering staff in each team. The 'inclusive' partnerships had between 15 students to over 100 students (in one large undergraduate class). The 13 teams were in the business disciplines, engineering, allied health, medicine, journalism/media, humanities, social sciences, biology, agricultural science, with three teams taking on interdisciplinary projects. The ages of the students ranged from school leavers to late middle age and were broadly representative of the age range in each of the cohorts that made up the teams. At the beginning of the project all participants reported that they had an interest in global learning, though all but four had minimal or no understanding of the concept (the four outliers were lecturers who had previous experience with IoC or global citizenship projects). Just three participants (lecturers) had previous experience with SaP.

Having outlined the demographic make-up of the teams, using broad brush categorisations of diversity, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of such generalisations. While 'diversity' is often described in terms of 'culture', this word is known to be one of the most difficult words to define in the English language (Williams, 1983). Cultural identity is 'dynamic, fluid, political and responsive to context', rather than 'fixed and static' (Clifford cited in Green & Mertova, 2009, p. 16). Other dimensions such as age, class, gender, geography add layers of complexity to individual identity, and it is the dynamic interaction among all the dimensions that influences one's values, expectations and identity. These demographic details are given merely to provide context for the study; no conclusions were sought regarding the impact of any of these demographic factors on the outcomes of the Fellowship.

### **Making sense of the findings**

The most obvious, recurrent findings in this study related to the benefits experienced by staff and students alike. Mirroring earlier findings of SaP studies, participants in the fellowship projects experienced a sense of increased agency within their institutions. This finding will be summarised

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briefly, before considering the benefits relating specifically to global learning - an area not previously addressed in SaP research. Finally, the most pressing challenges suggested in the participants' narratives will be explored. These I frame as 'provocations', as a way of initiating 'critical reflection ... on issues that are often otherwise overlooked, obscured or accepted as naturalised practice' (Pangrazio, 2017, p. 225).

### ***Enhanced agency***

In line with previous research (Cook-Sather et al 2014; Healey et al, 2014; Mercer Mapstone, 2017), an outstanding feature of all projects was an increased sense of empowerment, ownership, agency, self-efficacy, and resilience experienced by students and lecturers alike. Participants underscored their sense of equality in the project teams. Students felt empowered in the flat, open structure of the project teams. For example,

We had a really good partnership... communication was very open. We didn't see them as professors, we saw them as colleagues who were really trying to make a change and work towards the same goal. It was empowering [International student, health sciences].

Critical to participants' engagement in their projects was their sense of enjoyment. Comments such as 'I loved the experience'; 'it made me excited to come to uni' were common. Students particularly associated their enjoyment with opportunities to contribute to meaningful work that would enhance their own and their peers' learning. And for students and staff, enjoyment increased as they gained more experience and confidence. For example;

I did not know whether I would be competent enough to contribute. Then slowly, slowly, as students we started to throw around ideas. It was exciting, it was brilliant. [International student, social sciences]

Many lecturers felt they had 'rediscovered the joy of teaching' through their SaP involvement, and spoke of renewed inspiration, energy and commitment to teaching. Students spoke of being 'more engaged', and some attributed this change to becoming 'more active, less passive'.

### ***Engagement in global learning***

Turning specifically to engagement in global learning, all interviewees reported becoming increasingly aware of, and interested in the impact of globalisation in their lives, personally and professionally, and more committed to pursuing global learning in the future. By working in partnership with others, participants developed greater empathy and interest in those considered culturally different from themselves. Several explained that their deepening interest and commitment to global learning developed through their encounters with others in their project, and across the projects. Many spoke of a greater awareness of the lived realities of (culturally) other staff and students. Local Anglophone students and academics felt they developed more empathy for the challenges faced by international and minority students, and a commitment to ameliorating their difficulties. For example,

It suddenly hit me that the problems [of international students] are real, they go through so many difficulties and I didn't even realise how privileged I am. That's definitely what I'm going to do - find time to make this much better. [local student, business].

Insights such as this provide ample evidence that participants addressed the first learning objective of global learning: they became 'informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences' (AAC&U, 2015). However for some, appreciation of, and attentiveness to cultural differences tended to be the extent of their global learning, while others engaged more deeply in the implications of global connectedness through 'critical analysis of ... complex, interdependent global systems and legacies', in order to address the remaining two learning



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objectives (understanding the impact of our actions on local and global communities and addressing the world's most pressing, enduring issues) (AAC&U 2015).

A characteristic feature of those narratives indicating engagement with all three global learning objectives was the framing of partnerships in terms of reciprocity rather than amelioration; that is, they stressed the value of learning from each other, and in the process developing new ways of seeing.

Because I'm doing a business degree [international students'] understanding of how business is run is interesting ... it makes me rethink ... how we are fairly western-centric... [global learning] is opening up to other people's views and so it really has helped me to look at different aspects in the work that we're doing. [local student, business]

### ***Global learning: knowledge production starts with 'ignorance'***

Critical to the deeper epistemological engagement of some participants was the recognition of the limitations of their own cultural capital;

We've [lecturer and students] come to [global learning] a bit more equally I think, because I'm learning as much from them as what they're learning from me. Whereas if it was in a research context, there's still all of my background - not to be arrogant or anything - but I'd have the depth of knowledge that they [students] wouldn't necessarily have. Whereas with this, I'm learning as well - we are all students in some respects. Their interpretations might be quite different to mine as well. So it feels like mutual discovery... my understanding has broadened out. Before this, internationalisation of the curriculum was a bit of a term – it had no depth to me. I've got a little bit more of a sense that there's a whole stack that I don't know. [Local lecturer, science]

Without partnership we are just separate groups talking to the wall. When I see things I always start from my perspective... It's like you just confine yourself in a really small place and you just don't see how other people work and what they understand. I've learned a lot from a lot of people. [International student, science].

Thus, some students and lecturers came to recognise their own 'ignorance' in partnership with others. Typically, international staff and students find the value of the identity capital they bring with them is unrecognised (Soong, Tran & Hiep, 2015). Thus, they bear the full burden of 'ignorance' in intercultural encounters. Global learning challenges assumptions made by the cultural majority, because it necessarily involves everyone in recognising the value, and the limits of their own, and others' cultural capital. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977), Singh (2010) argues that recognising that ignorance and knowledge are inextricably entwined is 'productive': ignorance of another's cultural knowledge fuels inquiry. 'We proceed from a desire to overcome what we do not know and, through producing new knowledge, we concede new areas of ignorance' (Singh 2010, p. 34). The lecturer's quote above illustrates this movement from ignorance to new knowledge (from a singular to multiple perspectives on a particular experience), which in turn leads to awareness of new 'ignorance' (about internationalisation of the curriculum). In the SaPGL projects there were several such instances of 'productive ignorance' generating new understanding.

What is particularly remarkable about this finding of 'productive ignorance' is that it is equally evident across all disciplines engaged in projects. Research shows how entrenched intellectual traditions of the disciplines relating to beliefs about knowledge, knowledge production and pedagogy function as blockers to IoC (Clifford 2009; Leask & Bridge, 2013). Foundational to the 'hard pure' (science) disciplines is the understanding that knowledge is based on culturally neutral, value-free universal principles, in contrast to the 'soft' disciplines (humanities/social sciences) which understand knowledge to be co-constructed in specific contexts (Becher 1989). This may explain why science



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disciplines tend to be least engaged in the process of IoC (*cf.* Clifford 2009). However, in this study, those in science, as well as other disciplines, came to see global learning as dynamic, co-constructed and necessarily springing from a place of ‘ignorance’. Hence, recognising their cultural ignorance not only enabled participants to develop more complex understandings of global connectedness; for some, particularly in science disciplines, it also involved new forms of scholarly inquiry and knowledge production, and ultimately prompted a questioning of their disciplinary identity.

### ***Global learning as ontoepistemological exploration***

Identity and knowledge are inextricably linked in universities. While disciplinary ‘tribes’ (Becher, 1989) are arguably diluted in the today’s managerial universities (Trowler, 2012), academic identity founded on the epistemological foundations and authority of one’s discipline is still a strong feature of academic life. However, because global learning calls for a different kind of intellectual endeavour, one that involves an interdisciplinary ‘triple engagement’ of knowing, acting and being – reflexively – in the world (Barnett & Coate, 2005), the limits of one’s own knowledge become evident. As the quote below illustrates, this can lead to ‘a paradigm shift’ which is at one ontological and epistemological.

It throws the notion of what it means to be a student or a lecturer on its head. For me, it’s been a real shift – a paradigm shift. Once I was focused on the Intended Learning Outcomes and knowing the best way to get there was my job. Now I see it is a negotiated process. I see myself as a negotiator, a facilitator of affable conversations. I have come to realise that there is no one right way to be a student or lecturer. There are multiple ways. Working in partnership has allowed me to rethink ‘this is who I am’ and the students to do the same. [Lecturer, business].

Thus, global learning for some participants was ‘ontoepistemological’ (Barad 2007); that is, knowing and being were so entwined that they could not be usefully be considered separately. Some students also reflected in the same ontoepistemological vein; the partnership prompted them to rethink, and re-enact, what it means to be a student. Coming to question their previously accepted roles as receivers of knowledge, these students recognised the value of their own abilities as co-producers of new understandings.

We are no longer students just sitting in a lecture listening to the lecturer and doing the assignments assigned to us. Lecturers have agency, students do too. We are solving problems together. It is a challenge. We need to work out how to navigate the partnership, so we don’t overtake each other and so we can all contribute to our maximum capacities. [International student, business].

It is worth noting that not all participants became involved in such ontoepistemological explorations, where the development of new understandings of global connectivity involved a process of knowing and becoming. While it is not possible to draw generalisable explanations from this small study, this difference warrants closer examination.

### ***A closer look at the qualitative differences in participants’ engagement***

When examining the differences in participants’ engagement with global learning, a pattern is discernible: those in projects in the lower two quadrants of the Matrix (where students were co-creators of global learning) tended to develop more comprehensive and transformative understandings than those in the upper two quadrants (where students acted as informants for lecturers creating global learning). One plausible explanation for this can be found in the kind of relationships made possible in these different quadrants. Functioning as co-producers of curriculum necessitated a far greater sharing of knowledge, power, and responsibility, than did the projects in the upper quadrants, where students were positioned as informants. Lower quadrant projects profoundly challenged traditional student-staff relationships in universities and for this reason, necessitated far greater attention to process (Healey et al 2016). With such attention to process, there were multiple opportunities to engage with the kind of “disorienting dilemmas”, which lead to the

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altered perspectives associated with transformative global learning (Jones, 2013, p.100). The opportunity to understand and interrogate different, even conflicting perspectives in trusting respectful relationships is so crucial to critical transformative learning, that Kahn and Agnew (2017, p. 53) consider it to be 'one of the few "non-negotiable universals" of global learning' (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p.53).

Findings from this project suggest that if we are to accept such attention to process in the context of diverse staff-student partnerships as a 'non-negotiable', universities and those within them will need to address some profound challenges. SaPGL participants frequently bumped up against and were frustrated by the 'practice architectures', which enable and constrain particular kinds of 'bundles of sayings, doings, and relating' within universities (Kemmis & Groontenboer, 2008). Particularly salient were the naturalised, institutional practices around access and equity, the obsession with outcomes at the expense of process, and the workings of power and privilege. These challenges I frame as provocations, because they call for critical reflection and debate, if we are move beyond the small-scale pilots of the Fellowship, to imagine and enact 'what-might-be' (Cook-Sather & Felton 2017) in universities.

### ***Provocation 1: Access and equity***

While participants in all but one of the SaPGL projects approached the challenge of access and equity in partnership reflexively by selectively recruiting for diversity or including whole cohorts, those on the 'selective' end of the spectrum found it difficult to engage the wider student body in their SaPGL projects. Typically, when the students in 'selective' pilots invited input from their peers through surveys, discussion sessions, et cetera, they found participation was low, and tended to come from already engaged students. Several student partners reframed these experiences positively, as an opportunity to build resilience and problem-solving skills. For example,

You will be frustrated by people, and then somehow you have to pick it up and try again. That's what I have learned, it's building up my resilience [international health sciences student].

Nevertheless, the difficulties 'selective' student partners encountered in engaging their peers raises an urgent question, given that SaP risks further entrenching privilege (Matthews 2017; Mercer-Mapstone 2017): Should universities should seek to grow, expand and 'mainstream' SaP (that is, whether we should take a normative approach), and if so, how can they engage the apparently unengaged (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Peseta et al., 2017)? Macfarlane (2017) makes the vexing argument that the normative impulses of institution-wide 'student engagement' strategies (including presumably SaP) devalue students' differences and diminish their 'freedom to learn' as they wish. How we might, going forward, respect students' autonomy and freedom of choice while ensuring access for marginalised students who may be less likely than other students to imagine themselves as 'partners' in global learning is an open question that begs ongoing reflection and debate.

Shaping this debate is the increasing commodification of higher education, which positions students as consumers, and the curriculum as a product, delivered by lecturers (Green, 2017). Such a worldview is fundamentally at odds with the conceptualisation of students as partners in global learning, and indeed, several participants believed that the neoliberal 'consumer' discourse dominating higher education would substantially compromise wider adoption of SaPGL. However, according to some recent studies, student perceptions about the commodification of education vary widely, with some students ambivalent about the concept, some identifying with it partially, and some actively resisting it (cf, Tomlinson, 2016). Notably, in the SaPGL interviews, lecturers more than students feared that students' consumerist expectations would block wider SaPGL participation. In order to understand what these musings might mean for wider participation in SaPGL, further

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research is needed to better understand the way students imagine their role in our increasingly market-driven universities.

### ***Provocation 2: Process versus outcomes***

Other challenges arose because SaP is essentially a process-oriented, relational approach, at odds with the dominant neo-liberal obsession with measurable outcomes (Rizvi & Lingard 2009). Neither SaP (Healey et al 2016; Matthews, 2017), nor global learning (Kahn & Agnew, 2017) outcomes can be pre-determined. SaPGL is necessarily contingent and open-ended; knowledge is mutually constituted as participants become 'nodes in a global network... interstitial points where phenomena are interconnecting and given meaning' (Kahn & Agnew, 2017, p. 55). Engaging students as partners in global learning means paying attention to process - building trusting, respectful relationships, while negotiating entrenched workings of power in universities. This takes time, particularly in the beginning. While SaPGL participants believed time attending to process was well spent, they also believed that the time required, coupled with uncertain outcomes would be a significant blocker for others – though some believed that recognising and rewarding the work of all partners in SaPGL would be an effective incentive.

The SaPGL teams' focus on process meant they often bumped up against the outcomes expected by professional accreditation requirements, institutional policies, practices, and timeframes. When confronting these limitations students became frustrated. For example, one team proposed an assessable e-portfolio to support global learning across the curriculum. When this was blocked by the university's assessment policy, one student reflected,

I hoped that we would get a lot more cooperation with the faculty and a lot more teeth ... We wanted to really get out there and make a change. But I feel that bureaucracy is always there, oh we cannot do it because of this or that, we cannot do it because of that, then that's just the way it is and that's how the university stops change, and I was really disappointed. [international student, health sciences]

In a similar vein, another student reflected,

Maybe [developing] shared values between [the partners] and the Dean needs more attention. Because if a Dean doesn't want to change, no change will happen. [local student, health sciences].

At these times, SaPGL academic partners, to varying degrees, helped students navigate institutional and disciplinary practice architectures. In addition to their disciplinary knowledge, academics bring to partnerships their understanding of 'the organisational systems that structure learning, as well as the forms and rewards of capital that constitute the labour of university life' (Peseta et al., 2017, p. 9). This knowledge, often tacit, became explicit as the projects evolved. However, academic partners' ability to navigate institutional practice architectures was also limited. The increasing casualisation of academic staff, which characterises life in Australian universities added to this challenge, as many of the staff partners on short term contracts could not commit to seeing through more than very short-term curriculum changes. On the other hand, some student partners successfully pushed for more significant policy and procedural changes, which their lecturers felt incapable of pursuing. Ironically, in these instances, it may have been the 'student as consumer' rhetoric, which strengthened students' demands for change, with university management more eager to listen to their 'customers' than their staff. Such instances throughout the Fellowship recall Foucault (1998, p. 63): 'Power is everywhere', it 'comes from everywhere' and has neither an agency nor a structure.

### ***Provocation 3: Power and privilege in universities***

How might we harness the emancipatory, transformative potential of SaPGL in the face of higher education's discursive contradictions and entrenched practice architectures? Although two of the four

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universities in which SaPGL pilots developed had policies supporting SaP approaches, and one articulated global citizenship as a key curriculum theme, many teams experienced little or no interest or support for their SaPGL work in their discipline or university. SaPGL teams found that even where their work aligned with institutional rhetoric it was difficult to work against entrenched practice architectures from the bottom up. Clearly cultural change does not occur merely by 'top-down' decree (Leask, 2015). If not accompanied by substantial changes to practice architectures within universities, it is not difficult to imagine how SaP might be co-opted by university management to support neoliberal ideology, for example, by emphasising students' personal contribution to their education, or paying lip service to it in marketing material. Nevertheless, Cook-Sather and Felton (2017, 187) argue that SaP can be personally and structurally transformative if we conceptualise it as 'a space for trying it out "as if" it were a way of life'.

Offering a philosophy of process and becoming, Deleuze and Guattari have inspired several writers (*cf* Westman & Bergmark 2018) to imagine and enact what has not yet come into being within rigidly codified, 'territorialised' spaces of disciplinary and institutional structures. Craig Whitsed and I (2016) have previously taken up Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the games Chess and Go to explore how academic developers might operate across and outside of pre-determined, hierarchically organised roles/functions in order to seed changes to curriculum practices. While Chess pieces are 'coded' with 'internal nature and intrinsic properties' from which their 'movements, situations, and confrontations drive' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 352), Go has uncoded pieces which move in open, non-striated spaces 'wherein power is fluid and situational, rather than hierarchically fixed' (Whitsed & Green, 2016, p. 9). Thus, Go allows for movement with the least amount of resistance. The instances of SaPGL students in partnership with lecturers effectively engineering change suggest that they too have the capacity to play the Go-like game of disciplinary and institutional 'deterritorialisation' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). By imagining and enacting their way out of their codified and hierarchically stratified roles, both staff and students found, as others have, that 'partnership can be incredibly disruptive in the way that it challenges and blurs the boundaries and assumptions that underpin the traditionally hierarchical space of teaching and learning' (Mercer-Mapstone & Mercer, 2018, p.3). To recall the lecturer quoted earlier: SaPGL 'throws the notion of what it means to be a student or a lecturer on its head'. The partnerships between staff and students engaged in global learning throughout the Fellowship suggest possibilities for opening up and moving across open, smooth non-striated spaces within the university, in spite of the institution's formidable powers of 'reterritorialization' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

## **Conclusion**

The traditional power differential inherent in curriculum policy and practices in universities works to marginalise students' knowledge, interests and experience, particularly those from minority cultural backgrounds. This paper discussed work undertaken during an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship, which provided a framework for acknowledging and shifting those traditional power variables. Informed by the concept of 'students as partners' (SaP), the Fellowship brought together students and academics from diverse cultural and national backgrounds to co-develop rich global learning experiences in the formal and informal curriculum. Analysis of the data showed that adopting a partnership approach resulted in global learning for those involved. All interviewees experienced a greater sense of empowerment, ownership, agency, self-efficacy, and resilience. Regarding global learning specifically, they became more aware of cultural (and other) diversity, and more committed to ameliorating difficulties which might arise for international/cultural minority students. For some, global learning also meant deeper explorations of the implications of global connectedness for themselves, their peers, their discipline, and local and global communities. Characteristically, those who engaged in all three global learning objectives (AAC&U 2015) framed their partnerships in terms

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of reciprocity, recognized their cultural ignorance productively, and engaged in global learning as an ontoepistemological exploration.

At the same time, a number of challenges emerged. SaP, like feminism and other radical social movements, can be ‘incredibly disruptive in the way that it challenges and blurs the boundaries and assumptions that underpin the traditionally hierarchical space of teaching and learning’ (Mercer-Mapstone & Mercer 2017, p.139). SaPGL participants frequently bumped up against the rigidly codified ‘practice architectures’ and ‘contradictory logics’ in which universities operate. Access and equity, tensions between process and outcomes, and the workings of power and privilege in universities were particularly troubling themes, which emerged during the Fellowship. However, if we frame challenges as provocations – that is, as opportunities to critically analyse and creatively respond to the accepted, naturalised practices of universities – we can see exciting possibilities for staff and students engaging as partners in global learning in universities ‘as if’ it were already our way of life (Cook-Sather & Felton, 2017).

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